

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 77

By Campbell

A RESOLUTION to commend Evelyn Cook for her honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Evelyn Cook is one such admirable person who evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, a native of Shady Valley, Evelyn Cook attended Johnson County High School (JCHS) before enrolling at Berea College, from which she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English; she then earned a Master of Science degree in Educational Administration with a minor in English from the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, during her time at Berea College, Mrs. Cook studied drama, and vowed one day to return to JCHS as an educator and start a thespian troupe, which she did in 1952 with the founding of Troupe 1441; and

WHEREAS, she taught English for five years at JCHS, during which time her thespian troupe drew an increased interest in the drama department, which allowed the school to produce more advanced plays, such as *Ten Little Indians*, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, and *Arsenic and Old Lace*; and

WHEREAS, in 1957, Evelyn Cook and her husband moved overseas due to her husband's job as a superintendent of Department of Defense schools in England, France, Germany, and Turkey. Mrs. Cook taught English for five years at an American high school in Ankara, Turkey; and

WHEREAS, when her family moved to Germany, Mrs. Cook worked on a team with the director of the North Central Accrediting Association for Secondary Schools and Colleges to put

together a program which would allow military service personnel to attain a high school diploma instead of a G.E.D. The program became known as the Pre-discharge Education Program, or PREP, and Mrs. Cook first served as principal, and later as deputy director, of the European program; and

WHEREAS, in 1976, Evelyn Cook returned to Tennessee, where she resumed teaching English for four years at JCHS before becoming the first female to hold the notable position of assistant principal at the high school; later, she became the first secondary supervisor for Johnson County; and

WHEREAS, upon her return from Europe, Mrs. Cook discovered that JCHS had built a new high school without an auditorium and that the old high school auditorium had been turned into a storage facility. Thanks to her efforts and the efforts of a group of interested people, the old JCHS auditorium was renovated into a fully-functional performing arts center known as Heritage Hall, which gave the school system community theater, and visiting groups an excellent venue in which to perform; and

WHEREAS, Heritage Hall now showcases a full calendar of events, including a new organization for K-12 students called Johnson County Young Artists; due to the venue's relationship with Barter Theatre, the new organization was chosen as the first community to which Barter will bring workshops and classes for young people, furthering the importance of education of the arts; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Cook has distinguished herself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order, graciously donating her time and energies to numerous organizations; and

WHEREAS, she has served as a member and vice president of the Bristol chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma; as a charter member of the Mountain City chapter of Gamma Mu; as a member and three-time president of the Wednesday Music Club, a local chapter of the Tennessee Federation of Music Clubs; as a secretary of the Tennessee Federation of Music Clubs, which she served for one term; as chair of the Johnson County branch of the 1986 Tennessee Homecoming; and as co-chair of Johnson County's Tennessee 200 committee; and

WHEREAS, some of Evelyn Cook's other notable activities include being a member of Barter Theatre's Porterfield Society; being a top seller of Barter Theatre passbooks for the past four years and authoring two books, *From This Valley* and *Just a Country Boy*; and

WHEREAS, she also served on the Mountain City Pumpkin Festival committee from 2008-10, originated and organized "Scarecrows on Main," served on the Johnson County Library Board and on the United Way committee, and served as a charter member of the Johnson County Arts Council, the Johnson County Community Theatre, and the Johnson County Foundation, a branch of the Tennessee Foundation; she also served on the original downtown revitalization committee and as Lay Leader at First United Methodist Church for over fifteen years; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Cook's remarkable success as a public servant and civic leader is directly attributable to her reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and her uncommon ability to work well with people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, throughout her laudable career, Evelyn Cook has earned several noteworthy honors: she received a commendation from the State for Johnson County's outstanding Bicentennial brick sales, and in 1996, she received the Chamber of Commerce outstanding award; she was named a Tennessee Colonel by then-Governor McWherter for her efforts on behalf of the Tennessee 200, and received Mountain City Rotary Club's "outstanding person of the year" award for her work on Heritage Hall in 2010; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Cook is an extremely giving person who often reaches out with compassion to people whom life has treated unkindly, and she epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant, and reliable friend; and

WHEREAS, her many accomplishments aside, Evelyn is fortunate to share both love and companionship with her husband of sixty-three years; their daughter, Stephanie and her husband, Dr. Masaru Okabe; and their grandson, Kye; and

WHEREAS, Evelyn Cook is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and she should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby commend Evelyn Cook for her exceptional service to the good people of Tennessee as an educator of the highest order, salute her professional expertise and

personal excellence, and extend to her our best wishes for every continued success in all her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.